

grant program to encourage the use of assistance dogs by members of our Armed Forces and veterans.

Tens of thousands of our service members and veterans are struggling to cope with physical or mental health disabilities. Assistance dogs help these men and women lead more independent lives, assisting with mobility and balance, retrieving and carrying objects, responding to sounds, getting help, and providing social interaction and companionship. Trained dogs also offer many therapeutic benefits to soldiers and veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder by elevating their moods, building confidence, and reducing stress, all of which assist them in their transition back to civilian life.

Nonprofit organizations that train and provide assistance dogs to help our military personnel and veterans are receiving more and more requests. Groups throughout the country—including Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs in my congressional district—train and provide dogs for returning soldiers and veterans but rely on fundraising and volunteer staff to meet the growing demand.

The K-9 Companion Corps Act would provide competitive grants to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations whose mission is to address the physical and mental health needs of the men and women who have served our nation so honorably through the dogs they train and provide.

I thank my former colleague, Congressman Ron Klein of Florida, for his work on this bill last Congress and for his unwavering commitment to our military personnel, veterans, and their families.

#### TRIBUTE TO GREAT COMEBACKS TONY SNOW WINNER JUSTIN BLUM

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 8, 2011*

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of my constituents, Justin Blum of Florence, South Carolina. Justin has been selected as the Great Comebacks Tony Snow Public Service Award recipient for 2010. This award, named in memory of the former White House advisor and news broadcaster who passed away from colon cancer, was created to honor extraordinary individuals who are passionate about serving their country while dealing courageously with debilitating intestinal diseases and ostomy surgery.

The Great Comebacks Program is sponsored by ConvaTec in partnership with the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation (CCFA), the United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. (UOAA) and the Intestinal Disease Education and Awareness Society (IDEAS). Each year, Great Comebacks presents awards to individuals throughout the United States who have struggled with a chronic intestinal condition and have exhibited extraordinary strength and courage for managing to live full and productive lives despite daily struggles. Today, there are more than 700,000 men, women and children throughout our country affected by the very conditions that can result in an ostomy.

Following a 21-year history of ulcerative colitis, Mr. Blum opted for ostomy surgery while a Major on active duty in the Army. The words

"I can't" have never been part of Mr. Blum's vocabulary and he uses his ostomy to set an example to others that anything is possible in life if you set your mind to it. This drive allowed Mr. Blum to complete 21 years of active Army service before retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and to tackle his next goal of becoming a JROTC instructor. He is currently in his 15th year as a JROTC instructor at Marlboro County High School in Bennettsville, South Carolina and in this capacity has worked with more than 5,000 at-risk students.

Mr. Blum credits his wife for providing him with the emotional and physical support needed to transition to "life" as a permanent ostomate. He also credits his Wound Ostomy Care (WOC) nurse, Cindy Norris with performing selfless acts on behalf of her clients and for always being available to him.

Commenting on his ostomy, Justin says, "The best advice I have given other ostomates is that they are very fortunate and are now in a position to accomplish anything. As an ostomate, they are cured from previous afflictions like colitis or Crohn's and they have been provided a second chance for life. They can set an example for all to emulate by making a difference in the lives of others who do not have the motivation and self-esteem they are experiencing."

I urge my colleagues to take the time to meet with some of the Great Comebacks award recipients. Their personal stories, like Justin's, are inspirational and will heighten your awareness about some of the huge strides being made by people living with intestinal diseases or recovering from ostomy surgery.

#### THE FAMILY EDUCATION FREEDOM ACT

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 8, 2011*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Family Education Freedom Act, a bill to empower millions of working and middle-class Americans to choose a non-public education for their children, as well as making it easier for parents to actively participate in improving public schools. The Family Education Freedom Act accomplishes its goals by allowing American parents a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for the expenses incurred in sending their child to private, public, parochial, other religious school, or for home schooling their children.

The Family Education Freedom Act returns the fundamental principal of a truly free economy to America's education system: what the great economist Ludwig von Mises called "consumer sovereignty". Consumer sovereignty simply means consumers decide who succeeds or fails in the market. Businesses that best satisfy consumer demand will be the most successful. Consumer sovereignty is the means by which the free market maximizes human happiness.

Currently, consumers are less than sovereign in the education "market." Funding decisions are increasingly controlled by the federal government. Because "he who pays the piper calls the tune," public, and even private

schools, are paying greater attention to the dictates of federal "educrats" while ignoring the wishes of the parents to an ever-greater degree. As such, the lack of consumer sovereignty in education is destroying parental control of education and replacing it with state control. Loss of control is a key reason why so many of America's parents express dissatisfaction with the educational system.

According to a survey conducted by Education Next/Harvard PEPG, the majority of Americans support education tax credits. This poll also found strong support for education tax credits among liberals, moderates, conservatives, low-income individuals, African-Americans, and public-school employees. This is just one of numerous studies and public opinion polls showing that Americans want Congress to get the federal bureaucracy out of the schoolroom and give parents more control over their children's education.

Today, Congress can fulfill the wishes of the American people for greater control over their children's education by simply allowing parents to keep more of their hard-earned money to spend on education rather than force them to send it to Washington to support education programs reflective only of the values and priorities of Congress and the federal bureaucracy.

The \$5,000 tax credit will make a better education affordable for millions of parents. Madam Speaker, many parents who would choose to send their children to private, religious, or parochial schools are unable to afford the tuition, in large part because of the enormous tax burden imposed on the American family by Washington.

The Family Education Freedom Act also benefits parents who choose to send their children to public schools. Parents of children in public schools may use this credit to help improve their local schools by helping finance the purchase of educational tools such as computers or to ensure their local schools can offer enriching extracurricular activities such as music programs. Parents of public school students may also wish to use the credit to pay for special services, such as tutoring, for their children.

Increasing parental control of education is superior to funneling more federal tax dollars, followed by greater federal control, into the schools. A recent review of the relevant research conducted by Andrew J. Coulson of the CATO Institute shows that increasing parental controls increases academic achievement, efficiency, the orderliness of the classrooms, and the quality of school facilities. Not surprisingly, graduates of education system controlled by parents tend to achieve higher levels of education and earn more than their counterparts in bureaucratically controlled education systems.

Clearly, enactment of the Family Education Freedom Act is the best thing this Congress could do to improve public education. Furthermore, a greater reliance on parental expenditures rather than government tax dollars will help make the public schools into true community schools that reflect the wishes of parents and the interests of the students.

The Family Education Freedom Act will also aid those parents who choose to educate their children at home. Home schooling has become an increasingly popular, and successful, method of educating children. Home schooled children out-perform their public school peers